

OFFERED BY COUNCILORS JULIA MEJIA, TANIA FERNANDES ANDERSON,
RUTHZEE LOUIJEUNE, BREADON, COLETTA, DURKAN, FITZGERALD, FLYNN,
PEPÉN, SANTANA, WEBER, AND WORRELL



CITY OF BOSTON
IN CITY COUNCIL

IN THE YEAR TWO THOUSAND TWENTY-FOUR

**ORDER FOR A HEARING ON GOVERNMENT TRANSPARENCY AND
ACCOUNTABILITY TOWARDS SERVICE PROVISION SPENDING FOR
ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS**

WHEREAS, Boston Public Schools enrolls over 17,000 English Learner students, representing 31% of the District’s total student population. An additional 13% of students (more than 7,000) are former English Learners who have attained English proficiency; *and*

WHEREAS, In Boston, there are roughly 4,000 English Learners with disabilities who often have to choose between receiving support for their disability or their language needs; *and*

WHEREAS, The Boston School Committee and the Boston Public Schools have stated that access to native language is a priority, however, BPS has not yet developed strategic operational plans to implement access to native language as enabled by the LOOK Act either for English Learners or for English Learners with Disabilities; *and*

WHEREAS, According to a letter written by the BPS office of English Language Learners, addressed to the English Language Learners Task Force in 2021, there were only 2 full-time positions to support English Learners with disabilities and “were looking forward to filling both roles” to ensure that this group of students is receiving the services and targeted support to attend to both the needs of language acquisition and the disability; *and*

WHEREAS, A BPS report regarding the 2021 MCAS results for English Learners (October 2021) presented to the ELL Task Force demonstrated that the outcome for these students raise huge concerns among parents, advocates, community and school leaders, as 94% of English Learners fail the state English Language Arts MCAS exam in grades 3-8 and more than 96% of English Learners with Disabilities in those grades fail MCAS; the comparable figures for 10th grade are a 97% failure by English Learners and a nearly 98% failure rate for English Learners with Disabilities; *and*

WHEREAS, Data is collected around educator diversity in terms of racial background, very little information is known or collected around language diversity amongst our educators; *and*

WHEREAS, BPS received an investment of \$10 million in federal relief money over two years to expand programs that teach students in Spanish and other languages. The funding would pay for hiring and training teachers and developing curriculum; *and*

WHEREAS, On October 12, 2023, the Senior Deputy Superintendent of Academics, Linda Chen, noted in a letter that state and federal authorities are pushing the district to integrate English learners more fully in classes with “their English-speaking peers.” In response, eight members of the fourteen-member Boston Public Schools task force on English learners resigned in protest, indicating that the best way for children to learn English and academic content is with the use of the native language; *and*

WHEREAS, The Boston City Council has an obligation to ensure accountability, transparency, accessibility, and oversight over Boston Public Schools and city spending, especially in regards to large amounts of funding allocated towards solving a major issue in the schools; ***NOW THEREFORE BE IT***

ORDERED: That the appropriate committee of the Boston City Council holds a hearing regarding government transparency and accessibility of service provision and return on investment of spending for English Language students and English Language Learners with disabilities in the City of Boston. Representatives from the Boston Public Schools, the Boston School Committee, the English Language Learners Task Force, in addition to advocates, individuals with lived experiences, and members of the public are encouraged to attend.

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